

Alaska Sale Views

Compare four perspectives on the 1867 Alaska Purchase.

S.CE.e “comparing and contrasting historical, cultural, economic, and political perspectives;”

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline each of the four bracket-numbered statements. Next to each one, write historical, cultural, economic, or political to identify the perspective it shows.

One Purchase, Many Views

- ① In 1867, U.S. Secretary of State William H. Seward bought Alaska from Russia for \$7.2 million. Russia had claimed the region since the 1700s and worried that Britain might take it after the Crimean War. [1] Russian leaders saw selling Alaska as a political choice: it could keep Britain from gaining the territory and build ties with the United States. [2] Seward used a historical perspective, seeing the purchase as another step in United States expansion across North America.
- ② Alaska Native communities, including Tlingit, Iñupiat, and Unanga people, had lived in the region for thousands of years before the sale. The treaty did not ask these communities to agree to the transfer. [3] Many communities viewed the change from a cultural perspective because land, fishing places, trade, and local authority were connected to long-held traditions. U.S. officials later imposed new rules, while Native people continued to defend their languages, lands, and community life in changing conditions.
- ③ Some U.S. newspapers called the deal “Seward’s Folly,” arguing that the distant land was not worth its price. [4] These critics used an economic perspective: they compared the \$7.2 million cost with the territory’s unknown resources and the expense of reaching it. Later discoveries of gold and other resources changed many Americans’ opinions. The same event produced different views because people valued security, culture, cost, and expansion differently and knew different things at the time.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 How did Russian leaders and Seward view the Alaska Purchase differently? Use the perspective named for each man in the passage.

2 What details explain why many Alaska Native communities had a cultural perspective on the transfer?

3 Contrast the economic perspective of newspaper critics with the cultural perspective of many Alaska Native communities.

4 Why could later gold and resource discoveries change many Americans' opinions, even though critics had doubted the purchase in 1867?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Choose a past or present community decision, such as restoring a building, opening a factory, or changing a school rule. Write four sentences about it, one from a historical perspective, one from a cultural perspective, one from an economic perspective, and one from a political perspective.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline each of the four bracket-numbered statements. Next to each one, write historical, cultural, economic, or political to identify the perspective it shows. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did Russian leaders and Seward view the Alaska Purchase differently? Use the perspective named for each man in the passage.	Russian leaders saw the sale as a political way to keep Britain from gaining Alaska and to build ties with the United States. Seward saw it historically, as another step in U.S. expansion across North America.
2	What details explain why many Alaska Native communities had a cultural perspective on the transfer?	Land, fishing places, trade, and local authority were connected to long-held traditions. The treaty also did not ask Alaska Native communities to agree to the transfer.
3	Contrast the economic perspective of newspaper critics with the cultural perspective of many Alaska Native communities.	Critics focused on the purchase price, unknown resources, and the expense of reaching Alaska. Many Alaska Native communities focused on how the transfer affected traditions connected to land, fishing, trade, and local authority.
4	Why could later gold and resource discoveries change many Americans' opinions, even though critics had doubted the purchase in 1867?	Critics had compared the known cost with resources that were still unknown and with travel expenses. Later discoveries showed that Alaska had valuable resources, giving people new economic information.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

A town considers restoring an old railroad station. From a historical perspective, preservation groups value the station as evidence of the town's past. From a cultural perspective, residents may value it as a place for festivals and shared traditions. From an economic perspective, business owners may expect visitors to spend money nearby. From a political perspective, council members must decide how to use public funds fairly.

Accept equivalent explanations that accurately connect each perspective to details in the passage. For the open task, accept any reasonable community decision if all four perspectives are distinct and correctly applied.